

December 30

1968

No. 197

5th Year

VIETNAM COURIER

Information Weekly — E.O.: 46 Tran Hung Dao Street, Hanoi — Democratic Republic of Viet Nam

1968, A YEAR OF UNPRECEDENTED VICTORIES OF SOUTH VIET NAM'S REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

South Viet Nam PLAF Command's Dec. 20, 1968 communiqué

(Excerpts) *

VICTORIES IN ALL FIELDS

In the military field, according to still incomplete figures, the revolutionary forces:

— inflicted on the enemy 630,000 casualties including more than 230,000 U.S. and satellite troops. Besides, hundreds of thousands of puppet troops deserted or were disbanded;

— wiped out or heavily decimated one brigade, 7 regiments and multi-battalion units, 18 battalions, 48 armoured squadrons and over 250 U.S. satellite and puppet companies;

— shot down, destroyed on the ground or damaged 6,000 aircraft of various kinds;

— destroyed or damaged 1,500 military vehicles including more than 7,000 tanks and armoured cars;

— sank or set afire 1,000 vessels, combat launches or cargo ships, 40 of which with a displacement capacity of 1,000 tons or more;

— wrecked over 1,100 artillery pieces;

— set ablaze more than 1,000 ammunition stores or fuel dumps;

— blew up over 700 bridges;

— and razed to the ground or forced the enemy out of 1,500 military sub-sectors and posts.

These achievements by

far surpass those in 1966 and 1967 put together. In particular, the number of U.S. troops wiped out in 1968 nearly equals that for the whole 1961-1967 period.

These figures spell out the great victories of the heroic Viet Nam liberation forces and people in a one-year period. They are all the more significant since they were recorded at a time when the enemy still had the upper hand. The U.S. and puppet troops. What is remarkable is that all the crack units of the enemy have taken casualties of fifty per cent of their strength, apparently.

All the towns and villages in South Viet Nam, including Saigon, the last hide-out of the enemy, came under fire again and again.

Almost all of the enemy nerve organs from central to grassroots levels suffered heavy losses. All the vital communication lines of the enemy were repeatedly attacked or cut off.

All the three kinds of our armed forces—the regular army, the regional and guerrilla forces—have grown up in the course of the fighting and building. Their successes have been reflected in the size and in number on all battlefields, in the highland area, the plains as well as cities and towns. They have completely defeated the two-pronged "search-and-destroy" and "pacifi-

cation" plan of the enemy and foiled all their strategies and tactics as well as their large-scale operations.

On the political plane, the widespread uprisings of our people are a momentous and creative outcome of the fierce and dauntless progress of the South Viet Nam revolution. Ten of millions of our compatriots have spontaneously risen up to win back the right to be masters of the country.

The development supplies the most eloquent expression of the heroic and self-sacrificing spirit of our entire people who had rather die than be enslaved and who prize independence and freedom more than anything else.

Our people's great upsurges are credited with the liberation and complete control of more than 1,000 additional hamlets. Over 2 million more people have been freed from the enemy's grip. The revolutionary power has been set up in many villages, districts and provinces, which politically has dealt a mortal blow at the U.S.-puppets, shattering their plans of big claims and knocking off the "legal and constitutional" varnish of the puppet reactionary Thieu-Ky administration, protection which, in fact, represents

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* Sub-heads and emphases are ours Ed.

PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH'S MESSAGE

TO THE AMERICAN FRIENDS WHO OPPOSE THE U.S. IMPERIALISTS' WAR OF AGGRESSION IN VIET NAM

On the occasion of New Year 1969, I would like to extend to you my most cordial wishes for peace and happiness.

In the past year, the U.S. government had to stop unconditionally the bombing of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. That is a great victory common to the whole Vietnamese people, the progressive people in the United States and the peace-and-justice-loving forces in the world.

However, the U.S. ruling circles still indulge in acts of aggression against the life and security of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. To the South Viet Nam, they intensify the war of aggression, compelling over half a million young Americans to massacre the civilian population committing monstrous crimes. But the more obdurate U.S. imperialists are, the more they impair the situation in the United States, increase the numbers of young Americans sent to a useless death on the Viet Nam battlefield, suffering the many families

in the United States, thereby making an honourable solution to be within all U.S. and satellite troops from South Viet Nam and let the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs in accordance with the Political Program of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, without any foreign interference.

The Vietnamese people, having gone through over twenty years of uninterrupted wars, fully cherish the desire to attain genuine independence and freedom. But so long as their country is subjected to aggression, they are determined to fight till total victory. With the invincible strength of their national unity, and the warm support of their brothers and friends in all continents, our people are sure to attain their objective to liberate South Viet Nam, return the North, to contribute to the peaceful reunification of the Fatherland, thereby contributing to the maintenance of peace in Asia and the world.

I warmly hail the courageous struggle of our American friends whatever the colour of their skin, to demand that the U.S. government stop the aggressive war in Viet Nam; it is a struggle which, while supporting our people's resistance fight, defend the interests and honour of the American people and safeguard the life of their boys.

I wish you further successes in this just struggle.

Good health and good luck for the New Year.

HO CHI MINH

NFL AND DRVN DELEGATIONS' JOINT COMMUNIQUE on U.S. Puppets' Holding Up Paris Conference

THE delegation of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation led by Mr. Tran Bus Kiem and the delegation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam led by Minister Xuan Thuy to the quadripartite Paris Conference on Viet Nam on December 24 held talks at the seat of the delegation of the NFL. The two delegations published on December 25 the following joint communique:

"1. After U.S. President L. Johnson was compelled on October 31, 1968 to declare the unconditional cessation of bombing over the whole territory of the DRVN and, at the same time, proposed that the Paris conference on Viet Nam be held on November 6, 1968, the government of the DRVN and the Central Committee of the South Viet Nam N.F.L. respectively issued on November 2 and November 3, 1968, declarations reaffirming their position to resolutely

struggle for independence and freedom, and accepting to participate in the four-delegation Paris conference including the DRVN and the South Viet Nam, the U.S. and the Saigon administration. On November 4, 1968, Mrs Nguyen Thi Binh, the representative of the NFL delegation, failed to take part in the conference. But the Saigon administration, by means of tortuous arguments, refused to send its representatives to the conference on schedule. Confronted with this situation, the representatives of the DRVN and of the NFL proposed to the representatives of the U.S. that the three delegations already present in Paris should start the conference and that the representatives of the Saigon administration would join them as soon as they arrived in Paris. The U.S., however, did not accept this proposal, therefore over one month has

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The Viet Nam People's Army, founded on Dec. 22, 1944, is now 24 years old.

Photo: An infantry unit on the move.

EIGHT YEARS OF STRUGGLE, EIGHT YEARS OF VICTORIES

Ed.—On the occasion of the 8th founding anniversary of the South Viet Nam NFL, Giai Phong Press Agency has just released a long article reviewing the achievements of the NFL in the struggle against U.S. aggression over the past 8 years.

We give below an abridged version of the article. As for its last part devoted to the year 1968, we shall give only brief excerpts. Our readers are invited to see for more details, excepts of the PLAIF communiqué in this issue.

THREE last 8 years constitute a decisive period in the history of the South Vietnamese people's revolution. It has been marked by a period of struggle which have greatly changed the initial situation:

As far as the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys are concerned, it has been a downward march. They began with the dispatch of U.S. troops to South Viet Nam with a view to a total conquest, that they are seeking to "de-Americanize" the war of aggression. They began by trying to annihilate the South Viet Nam's armed forces and now they admit that a military solution to the South Viet Nam problem is not feasible and are striving hard to find other situations advantages for them. They began by obstinately refusing to recognize the Front, now they are talking to it and come to talk with it.

As far as the South Vietnamese people are concerned, they have been an upward climb. They began with guerrilla warfare, with forces supplied with rudimentary weapons and now they have at their disposal big and modernized capitals of attacking even the most strongly guarded lairs of the enemy. They began with isolated uprisings against a numerically superior enemy and now they stage generalistic uprisings throughout the enemy everywhere. As for the National Front for Liberation, at first it was limited to only a restricted number of people and today it has become a powerful force, uniting under a common social classes and strata and revolutionary organizations in South Viet Nam. It is doing its duty as a real people's administration and enjoys the confidence and support of the popular masses and a high prestige in the world.

It is an undeniable fact that from weak, the South Vietnamese people's revolution have now become strong, and that for the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys, the process has just been the other way round.

OVER these past 8 years, the South Vietnamese people, who have been resisting the biggest arms of aggression, have ever known, have been winning tremendous victories.

Preliminary statistics show that during this period, reckoning up to the beginning of 1968, there were close to one million enemy troops killed, wounded or captured, and a large number of others taken prisoner, and along a number of prisoners.

The South Vietnamese people have won, since the launching of the generalized attacks and uprisings of the summer of 1967, a series of miltiational and strategically significant victories. Their resistance to U.S. aggression has reached a new level, the period of outburst of impetuous and sustained attacks and uprisings, turned into a period of irresistible gliding toward their ultimate doom.

The morale of U.S. troops has also been sinking critically. In the last 8 years, GI's, seized with fear, sought to avoid combat with the PLAF, deserted to take refuge in many cities, towns and villages, and the morale of the generalized attacks and uprisings, the militia, guerrillas and armed forces, declined rapidly. Cases of GI desertion were numerous, nearly 60,000 enemy casualties, shot down, destroyed or damaged 450 planes and helicopters, 1,200 tanks and armoured vehicles, razed more than 700 posts and seized about 3,000 weapons of different types.

Busted by the impetuous widespread attacks by the PLAF, the armed uprisings of the masses, the morale of the armed forces has been shattered, and has sent 168 delegations to international, regional and national conferences and 237 delegations on friendly visits to many countries. Its affiliated organizations are members in 11 international organizations.

At first, the slogans were meant to encourage enemies, demand compensation, boycott reactionary policies and measures, secure democratic liberties and vital economic rights.

Today they are aimed at the overthrow of the puppet administration, the overthrow of the U.S. front, the people's right to sovereignty, independence and freedom and the restoration of peace. Since last "Tet", this movement has been gaining fresh momentum and strength, and has become an important directional force in the whole of South Viet Nam. It has reflected the desire of the majority of the aggressor's conduct aggression under a colonialist form.

Agitation work among enemy troops has also yielded great successes. According to still incomplete figures, by Sept. 1968, more than 10,000 puppet agents had deserted or had been disbanded. Developments on the battlefield today clearly show that the puppet army is not viable without the backing of U.S. troops.

The victories recorded in all fields by the South Vietnamese forces in the period under review have made possible the emergence of a liberated zone stretching from the 17th parallel to the Ca Mau point over four-fifths of South Viet Nam, with two-thirds of the population. In these liberated areas and "strategic hamlets" and

From Aug. 22 to Sept. 20, people in the coastal plain of Central Trung Bo launched concentrated and wide-spread attacks, capturing 248 concentration areas and "strategic hamlets" and

liberating 13 more villages and 51 more hamlets with a nearly 110,000 population.

—By the end of Oct. 1967, the South Vietnamese people's liberation committee had been set up in Central Trung Bo; in Central Trung Bo, the local armed forces and people's liberation power had been established in 450 villages. In Quang Ngai alone, by the end of Aug. 1968, the revolutionary power had been instituted in 167 of the total 150 towns and districts. In the 17 provinces, 100,000 inhabitants had been liberated.

In the first 65 days of the generalized attacks and popular uprisings in early spring this year alone, thousands of enemy-built fortifications had been destroyed and more than 1.6 million people liberated. In the Quang Tri - Thua Thien area, the local armed forces and people's liberation power had been established in 450 villages. In Quang Ngai alone, by the end of Aug. 1968, the revolutionary power had been instituted in 167 of the total 150 towns and districts. In the 17 provinces, 100,000 inhabitants had been liberated.

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the total 3 million peasants of cultivated land had been allotted to peasants in the liberated areas. The majority of the peasants has taken part in mutual-operative farming, production and work-exchange teams...

—In 1966, the liberated zone had 5,094 general education schools with 1,071 primary schools and elementary schools with nearly 100,000 pupils. In Central Nam Bo, 1,400 primary and elementary classes have been opened for 42,000 pupils.

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—The local armed forces and people's liberation committee have been elected in Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Hau Giang, An Giang, Ninh Dang, Ca Mau, My Tho and Kien Phong.

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the total 3 million peasants of cultivated land had been allotted to peasants in the liberated areas. The majority of the peasants has taken part in mutual-operative farming, production and work-exchange teams...

—In the first 3 months of 1968, the *Liberation Publishing House* printed more than 15,000 books of different kinds: more than 45,000 copies of leaflets and more than 40,000 leaflets. And posters were put out. The Advertising Film Studio distributed 100 documentaries. There are now in the liberated areas 49 film studios, 100 bookstores, 100 cultural, recreational and municipal authorities. Major papers, such as *Giai Phong* (*Liberation Army*) and *Tren Phong* (*Vanguard*) have been widely circulated, even in areas still under enemy control.

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"ANY AGGRESSOR WHO PERSISTS IN HIS ATTEMPT AGAINST OUR COUNTRY WILL INEVITABLY COURT SHAMEFUL FAILURE"

(From General Vo Nguyen Giap's Speech at the ceremony commemorating the founding of the Viet Nam People's Army)

THE 24th anniversary of the founding of the VNAF, one of the principal instruments of our people's revolutionary struggle, was solemnly observed at the same time with the 3rd anniversary of the VNAF's National Resistance, a grand meeting held in Hanoi on Dec. 21 in commemoration of President Ho Chi Minh and leading Party and Government officials, General Vo Nguyen Giap, General Secretary of the Political Bureau of the CC of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, Vice Premier and Minister of National Defense, delivered an important speech.

The speech pointed out that the success of the Vietnamese people originate from two primordial factors: the correct and positive line of the Party and the "centuries-old history of our nation."

For more than 20 centuries now, the Vietnamese have been fighting against foreign aggression to build up an independent State and Nation.

The speaker, with his usual insight, made an analysis of the military success obtained by the Vietnamese in their struggle against U.S. aggression in both parts of our country and drew from this the indispensable lesson.

In the South, the General said the people and their armed forces have won victory after victory and the growing prestige of the VNAF at home and abroad, has made it possible to establish the revolutionary power at various levels. This new victory has given rise to a new atmosphere of overflowing zeal and enthusiasm.

The new power continued to distribute land to the peasants who work and help them, in particular, to organize themselves into mutual-help teams with a view to boosting production.

Great attention has been paid to the development of education, health and cultural work.

—In the liberated zone, three-fourths of the total number of inhabitants have each an assistant doctor and on average there is one assistant doctor or one doctor for every 10,000 inhabitants. There are clinics for every 1,200 inhabitants; each village has a 30-metres medical worker. Dispensaries, pharmacies, hospitals are found in all areas. At present, there are in the liberated zone a medical college and 6 schools training doctors.

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PLAF wiped out 270 cruel agents and U.S. troops then went over to the PLAF with their weapons. In November, one puppet company and one civil force company deserted. So did 140 soldiers of another 200-man unit. On Nov. 30, as many as 145 puppet armymen ran away in Can Gio.

In Long An province, 5 collectives rebellions were recorded in November, 10 by many soldiers. Battalion 1 and Battalion 3 of Regiment 31 deserted on Nov. 28, and on Nov. 28, 58 men of Battalion 1, Regiment 31 left it.

Hundreds of other puppet armymen were captured and ministered in My Tho, Rach Gia and Ca Mau provinces.

In My Tho, Security Forces Company 172 broke away on March 1, 1968. On Nov. 28, three hundred officers and men of the unit joined the Hung Vuong

their weapons and demanded their return to their native villages. Earlier, on Dec. 2, two war-resisting puppet regiments fled to the mountainous areas to join their commandos' order to go on a foray mission.

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What is most remarkable is that in the 3 months ending Oct. 31, 3,065 puppet armymen stationed in Can Gio and Rach Gia provinces, after successive victories of the PLAF. They also confirm the increasing realization of the puppet armymen of the service of the NFL's cause.

Military Training Camp deserted in November. In the capital of this province, 23 puppet policemen left their posts and rejoined their families.

On Nov. 30, members of Battalion 3, puppet Regiment 31 ran away while moving north to Hanoi. In Ca Mau province, hundreds of puppet armymen left their ranks in Rach Gia in the 6 days ending Nov. 9.

These examples and descriptions are only samples of a widespread break away movement throughout South Viet Nam. They reflect the anxiety and fear and depression now rampant among South Vietnamese puppet army men. They also confirm the increasing realization of the puppet armymen of the service of the NFL's cause.



U.S. bomb and mines have never succeeded in hampering the traffic of ferries over Nghia An Province rivers

Eloquent Figures

South Viet Nam Liberated Areas Constantly Strengthened and Widened

In the first 65 days of the generalized attacks and popular uprisings in early spring this year alone, thousands of enemy-built fortifications had been destroyed and more than 1.6 million people liberated. In the Quang Tri - Thua Thien area, the local armed forces and people's liberation power had been established in 450 villages. In Quang Ngai alone, by the end of Aug. 1968, the revolutionary power had been instituted in 167 of the total 150 towns and districts. In the 17 provinces, 100,000 inhabitants had been liberated.

ON THE LARGE SOUTHERN FRONT

MILITARY OPERATIONS

HEAVY U.S.-PUPPET LOSSES IN 3 DAYS

(Dec. 21-Dec. 23)

- A position completely destroyed near Tay Ninh: 1 battalion and 2 companies wiped out, more than 600 men put out of action.
- Another puppet battalion completely wiped out East of Saigon.
- Two road convoys ambushed: 36 vehicles including 7 tanks and armoured troop carriers destroyed, 160 GI's killed or wounded and 8 aircraft brought down after 25 minutes' fighting near Tay Ninh; 22 lorries and 5 helicopters wrecked and some 100 GI's put out of action by PLAF artillery near the 17th parallel.
- Da Nang, Kontum and Cu Hanh (Pleiku) airfields heavily pounded in the same night (Dec. 22 to Dec. 23).

The most remarkable event of the PLAF last week's military operations in South Viet Nam through news reports released by *Giai Phong* Press Agency was incontestably the great annihilation battle of Ben Cau on the night of Dec. 21 to Dec. 22. At least seven U.S.-puppet positions established in this district town, 70km Northwest of Saigon, in Tay Ninh province, were reduced to cinders by the PLAF while defenders of nearby enemy positions were pinned down by artillery bombardments and guerrilla hand-to-hand actions. At Ben Cau, a U.S. battalion and 2 puppet Ranger companies were completely wiped out, more than 600 casualties. The enemy also sustained other losses including three 105mm howitzers, six 106mm heavy mortars, a million rounds of ammunition, the entire bullet, tent or brick houses and casemates destroyed, a fuel dump burnt and many weapons seized.

On Dec. 17, at a point about 20km from Ben Cau, on Route 29 between Tay Ninh and Da Lat, another deadly ambush laid by the patriots cost the Americans 36 vehicles destroyed (among them 16 armoured troop carriers) and 160 GI's killed or wounded. In addition, 7 helicopters and 1 jet plane were downed in this 25 minute battle.

On the night of Dec. 20, at 10km East of Le Loi Thanh, a town located 100 km east of Saigon another PLAF lightning attack wrote off the muster roll of a puppet battalion comprising 3 companies and their commanding officer. Meanwhile, in Saigon itself, on the occasion of the anniversary of the NFL many NFL flags appeared in the streets, especially in the 5th and 6th districts.

On December 22, in broad daylight, a puppet company was wiped out at about 20km from Saigon and 100 km East of Long Thanh. Farther North in the Western Highlands, other enemy units were badly mauled. On Dec. 21, an enemy company stationed at Kong H'ong (12km

Southeast of Dakto and 70km South of Da Nang came under a PLAF artillery-illery attack and had to abandon its posts.

On the night of Dec. 22 and Dec. 23, heavy artillery bombardments were mounted against the airfield of Kontum (about 50km South of Da Nang) where 4 U.S. choppers were destroyed, and that of Cu Hanh, near Pleiku, where 3 Capt. transport planes met with the same fate.

In the Da Nang sector, Western news agencies reported a violent attack by PLAF on a mixed U.S.-puppet position, 5km West of the City, on Dec. 22. The same sources said that U.S. Marines and puppet troops rushed into the rescue of the battered troops were intercepted. Enemy losses were given as heavy. On the night of Dec. 22, a big U.S. Da Nang airbase was again pounded and the HQ of the 1st Marine Air wing was hit by PLAF shells.

Giai Phong Press Agency has just released the balance sheet of the wave of offensives that took place in this sector on the night of Dec. 15 (see our last issue) and resulted in 420 US-puppet casualties.

In the Northernmost sector of South Viet Nam, near the DMZ and on Highway No. 9, an extraordinary feat was achieved on Dec. 23 by Long Thanh rebels who caught a whole US convoy by surprise as it was delivering goods at a warehouse between Tan Lam and Sa Mus, close to a helicopter landing zone. A deluge of fire rained on the enemy who, within minutes, lost more than 100 GI's killed or wounded and 22 lorries, 5 choppers, 2 fuel depots and 1000 boxes of supplies destroyed or burnt. A fire raged over the whole sector for hours. On the waterway linking Ca Mau port to Dong Ha and the enemy outposts in this sector, on Dec. 17,

ao and 21. 11 landingcraft of the LCU type with their cargoes and a patrol boat were sunk by the patriots.

EARLY in Dec. 1968, a congress was held in Quang Nam province. The people's councils at provincial level, their people's councils and people's committees had been returned in a large number of villages and districts. The gathering was attended by representatives of all the ethnic minorities, religious communities and revolutionary organizations in the province. It elected the provincial people's council and the provincial people's committee, comprising 7 members with Dao Duc Trinh as its chairman.

More than 1,500 people staged a meeting to welcome the country".



PLAF men pursuing the enemy on a river in the High-Plateaux

Saigon and Can Tho: Big Demonstrations against Puppet Clique

REPORTS from Saigon said that on the night of Dec. 24 a large number of plainclothes university and college students staged a street demonstration for restoration of peace, serious talks with the NFL, dismantling of the Thieu Ky Huong regime and formation of a peace government.

Starting from the Saigon Students' Headquarters, the demonstrators marched through many streets and were dispersed by police barely 80 metres from the residence of

puppet chief Nguyen Van Thieu. Fierce clashes took place between the demonstrators and suppressive cruel police who made about 100 arrests.

Panic-stricken, the Saigon mayoralty next day hurriedly made public a communiqué putting much emphasis on the "restoration of peace" demanded by the Thieu Ky Huong administration in early Nov. this year, which threatens to bring demonstrators before a military tribunal in compliance with emergency proce-

dures, in a bid to intimidate the people of Saigon, Huu and other South Vietnamese cities.

FOLLOWING the more than 10,000 strong Dec. 4 demonstration, for 3 days in a row ending Dec. 6, thousands of people from the provinces gathered at the Thieu Ky Huong residence during this year, which threatens to bring demonstrators before a military tribunal in compliance with emergency proce-

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